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Reverence

A reverence is a small bow made when greeting someone or on certain other occasions. It nearly always accompanies the word "Rayati", and is made wherever Rayati is given.

Note that in idiomatic Aristasian speech, Reverence is *made* and Rayati is *given*. So a person is described as "making reverence". If the action is described she may be said to "make deep reverence", "make slight reverence" etc. To "make *one's* reverence" tends to be used of children, as in "Make your reverence, dear" or "I made my reverence, Mommy". Sometimes this form is also used where a "cute" or "childlike" effect is intended. "The blonde made her reverence" has a distinctly more "cutesy" nuance than "The blonde made reverence".

Reverence may be made with the hands pressed together (as in a West-Tellurian attitude of prayer), either at the chest or at the forehead. The latter is more respectful or humble. Everyday reverences are often made with the hands at the sides (brunettes and especially military) or folded over the solar plexus (blondes) or abdomen.

The reason often given for the differing styles of blonde and brunette reverence is that blondes are "closed" in comparison to the "openness" of brunettes. Thus, in a traditional style of old Southern house that is built around a courtyard, blonde rooms always face inward, onto the courtyard and brunette rooms tend to face outward to the "world".

Th idea that blondes and brunettes manifest respectively the inward and the outward, the enclosed and the open, is reflected in the traditional styles of reverence.

Blondes may also curtsey by way of reverence, though this is less common except in certain areas. There is also a sort of combined bow and curtsey (a bow accompanied by a lowering of the knees) which is sometimes used by blondes to show especial respect. This form is also considered particularly courtly and elegant in some circles.

The use of the curtsey by blondes is sometimes explained by the fact that maid's upright posture is the sign of her Axial

nature (*vide* Maid) as opposed to animal creation, and blondes, being regarded in some ancient cultures as the more spiritual sex, should, in making reverence, lower themselves without compromising their Axial uprightness.

Whether bow or curtsey, the *depth* of the reverence is the primary indicator of the degree of reverence being accorded, as well as the position of the hand in the pressed-hands style. It may vary from a nod of the head to a 15-degree, 30 -degree, 45-degree or even 90-degree bow. Very deep reverence is appropriate for making serious apologies (for slight apologies a smaller one is appropriate) and for greeting spiritual superiors and superiors very senior to oneself. Thanks are also often accompanied by reverence, again the depth of the reverence according to the profundity of the thanks. The most extreme reverence consists of kneeling and touching one's forehead to the ground. This is made by very great inferiors, and also when apologising very profoundly for some grievous offence.

In some contexts, such as certain military units, certain schools, and in some (but not all) very traditional areas, precise degrees of reverence are prescribed for most different circumstances. In general, however, degrees of reverence are a more or less "instinctive" matter: though in a foreign country or area, one should carefully note the practice of others.

A slight reverence - just a nod of the head sometimes may be used by superiors acknowledging inferiors but not fully reverencing them. It is also used in some very informal settings (as among some younger people in Quirinelle and Vintesse - especially the more northerly regions) where full reverence is being "skipped" or "slurred over". This can cause offence in more formal company, and in general one is advised to use the most formality compatible with a given situation, at least until one knows people well enough to know what is acceptable to them.

When superiors lightly acknowledge inferiors, or do not reverence at all, this is not a sign of arrogance or disrespect. Rayati is given to all, since the Solar Spirit is in all. The Reverence might be likewise made to all and in some cases is: but where a superior has any form of guardianship over the inferior who is saluting her (a teacher, a priestess, a direct personal superior etc.) the absence of the reverence is seen as a sign of "being a rock" for the inferior. The superior ultimately represents the Empress and Dea Herself to the inferior, thus she accepts reverence on behalf of the Golden Chain of which she is the higher link.

While some Tellurians, with their individualist and democratist assumptions, might find this surprising, the acceptance of reverence by her superiors is actually a comforting and warming thing to an Aristasian: a perpetual sign that she is not forced to fend for herself as an isolated

individual, but is anchored firmly to the Golden Chain of Divine Authority.

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